



EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

AUGUST 2023

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT

**SECONDARY CATCHMENT ANOMALY REZONING
AT LUMPHANAN**

**Consultation open between
5 September 2023 - 3 November 2023**

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LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk**

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL IS PROPOSING, SUBJECT TO THE OUTCOME OF THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION PROCESS:

- **To rezone Aboyne Academy catchment area to include the area in the Lumphanan School catchment area currently zoned to Alford Academy.**
- **The proposal would apply to all secondary aged pupils within the anomaly (Area A) of the Lumphanan School catchment area from August 2024.**
- **There will be no requirement for existing secondary school pupils to move schools if the catchment area changes.**

This document has been issued by Aberdeenshire Council in accordance with the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 as amended. The Act requires that changes to the school estate, including a school boundary or catchment area, are subject to rigorous statutory consultation.

The schools affected by this proposal are:

- Aboyne Academy
- Alford Academy
- Lumphanan School

DISTRIBUTION

A copy of this document is available on the Aberdeenshire Council website: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/education-consultations/> or by emailing learningestates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

This document will be provided to:

- Parent Councils of Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy and Lumphanan School
- Parent/Carers of pupils attending Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy and zoned to Lumphanan School.
- Pupils and Staff at Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy, Lumphanan School
- Trade union representatives of staff at Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy and Lumphanan School
- Lumphanan, Torphins, Donside and Cromar Community Councils
- Residents living within Area A of the Lumphanan School catchment area
- Education Scotland

A copy of this document is also available from:

- Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy, Lumphanan School
- Aboyne and Alford Libraries
- Woodhill House, Westburn Road, Aberdeen, AB16 5GB
- Learning Estates Team (call 01771 676600 or email LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk to arrange for a paper copy to be posted)

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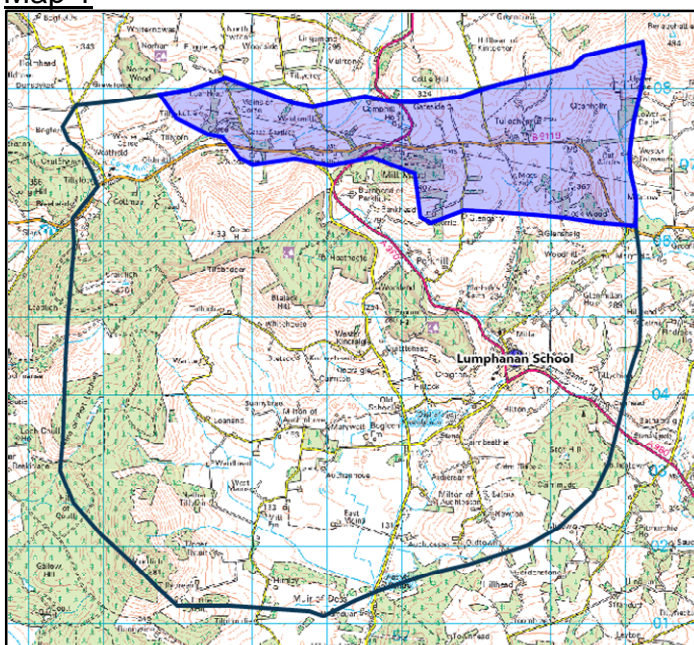
1. Legislative Background

- 1.1 The proposal is advanced within the context of all applicable legislation. Amongst other duties, education authorities are required to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education (Section 1 of the Education Act 1980); and to endeavour to secure improvement in the quality of school education in schools that are managed by them (Section 3 of The Standards in Scotland's Schools Act 2000).
- 1.2 The Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 requires that when a change is to be made to a school boundary or catchment area then a formal consultation must be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders.

2. Introduction

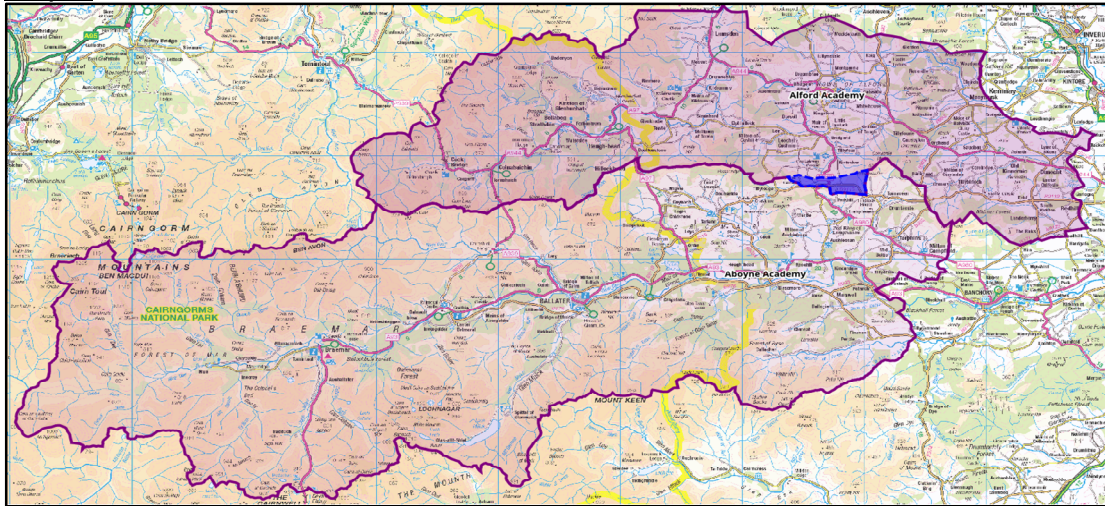
- 2.1 Aberdeenshire Council strives to allocate its resources in a way that ensures the quality of all its services. It attaches particular importance to providing the best possible educational experience for all pupils within its schools.
- 2.2 This proposal document contains several maps. Pdf copies of all maps will be available on the Aberdeenshire Council website at the address given on page 2 of this document. Printed copies of the maps will also be available on request at Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy and Lumphanan School.
- 2.3 This proposal document is focussed upon an area within the Lumphanan School catchment area, located within the Marr area of Aberdeenshire. This area is an anomaly within the secondary school catchment for Lumphanan school which means pupils residing within this area are zoned to Alford Academy instead of the Cluster Academy for Lumphanan School which is Aboyne Academy.
- 2.4 Map 1 below shows the area referred to as "Area A" throughout this document.

Map 1



- 2.5 Map 2 shows the location of Area A in relation to the Aboyne Academy and Alford Academy catchment areas.

Map 2



- 2.6 The consultation will run from Tuesday 5 September 2023 until Friday 3 November 2023. A public meeting will be held to discuss the proposal at 6.30pm on 14 September 2023 at Lumphanan School.

- 2.7 The consultation process for this proposal is set out in detail in Section 15.

3. Reason for Proposal

- 3.1 This proposal is being advanced for the following reasons:

- 3.2 The children living in the Lumphanan School catchment are part of the Aboyne Cluster of schools and would be expected to attend Aboyne Academy for secondary provision. However, there is a historical anomaly that exists from the closure of O'Neil Corse School in 1984 and the division of its catchment area between Craigievar School and Lumphanan School, including the secondary catchment area.

- 3.3 The children living within Area A of the Lumphanan School catchment are in zone for Alford Academy. In 2014 Education, Learning and Leisure senior management agreed that any new children living in this area, whilst considered out of zone for Aboyne Academy, should be entitled to free school transport until such time as the agreement could be formalised under a statutory consultation.

- 3.4 In June 2023, Aberdeenshire Council carried out an informal survey for the residents in the catchment area anomaly in Lumphanan, to gain their views on the current secondary school catchment area for their address/postcode.

- 3.5 The informal survey gave a summary of the background of the catchment anomaly and asked a variety of questions regarding the pupils within this area of the Lumphanan catchment and which school they think their postcode/address should be zoned for. There was also a comment box for any additional views.

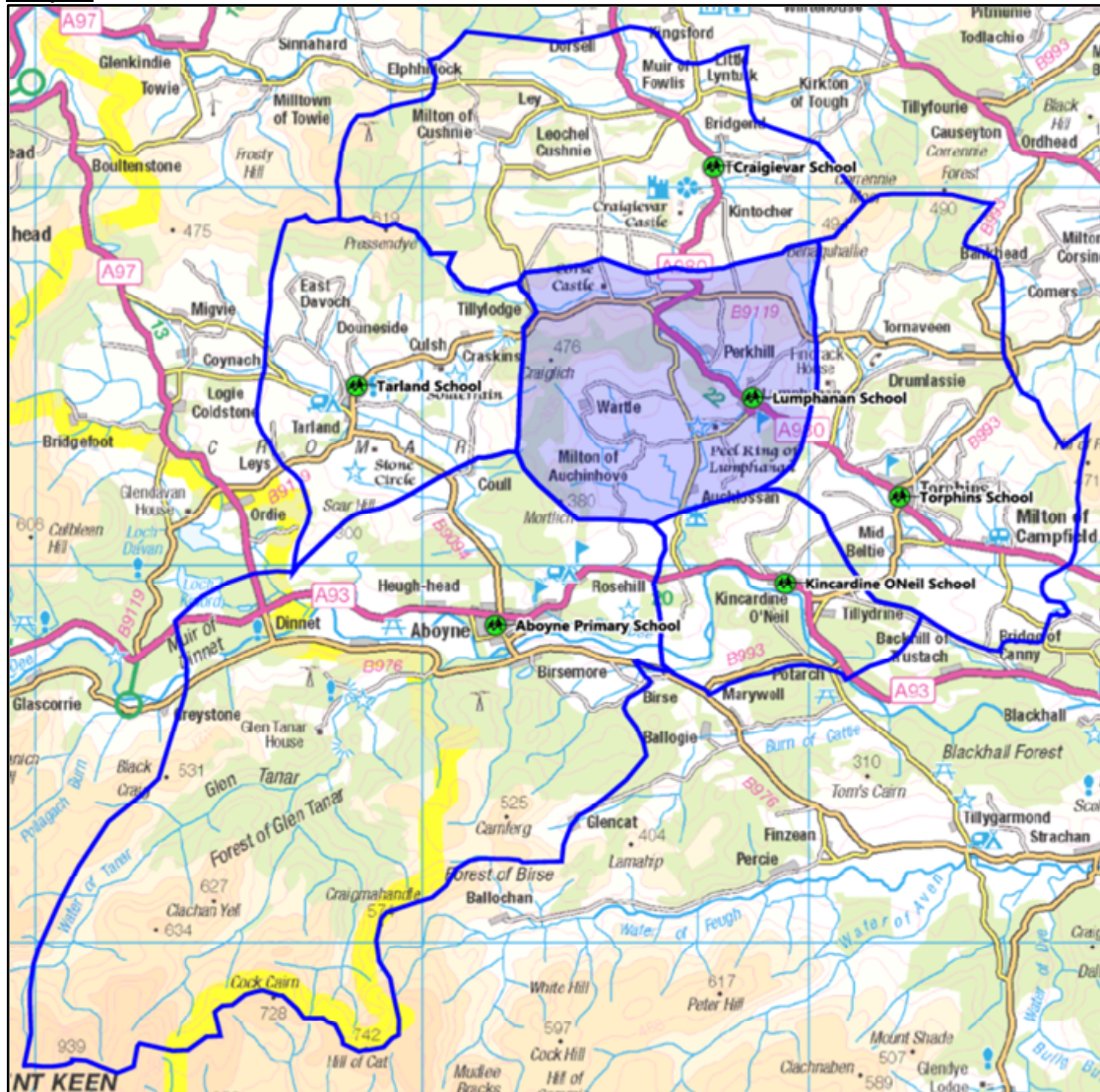
- 3.6 The results of the informal survey were that the majority (91%) of participants living within the catchment anomaly area believe their postcode/address should be zoned to Aboyne Academy for secondary education. The remaining participants had no preference.
- 3.7 The majority of the comments from the survey were in favour of being in zone for Aboyne Academy. The common themes on the feedback were that zoning for a secondary school should be in alignment with the primary school catchment for the children's mental health and social benefits of children moving to an Academy with their primary peers. There were also comments regarding travel and school transport stating the realignment of catchments make sense. Participants also expressed they would like to continue to be part of the Aboyne/Lumphanan community.

4. Schools

Lumphanan School

- 4.1 Lumphanan School is within the Aboyne Cluster with nine other Primary Schools; Aboyne Primary, Ballater, Braemar, Crathie, Finzean, Kincardine O'Neil, Logie Coldstone, Tarland and Torphins Schools. Lumphanan School is zoned to Aboyne Academy for secondary education with exception of Area A which is zoned to Alford Academy.
- 4.2 Lumphanan School is located on School Road, Lumphanan, Banchory, AB31 4SU. The school is non-denominational and serves Lumphanan village and the surrounding rural area.
- 4.3 Scottish Government guidelines classifies Lumphanan School as a "remote rural school" (area with a population of less than 3,000 and more than 30 minutes' drive from a settlement with a population of 10,000 or more).
- 4.4 The catchment area for Lumphanan stretches from Camphill to the north, bordering with Craigievar School catchment area and to the south at Muir of Dess bordering with Aboyne Primary and Kincardine O'Neil Schools. The catchment flows from the East at Tullock Hill bordering with Torphins School to Craiglich in the west bordering with Tarland School catchment area.
- 4.5 Map 3 below shows the Lumphanan School catchment area and the surrounding schools.

Map 3

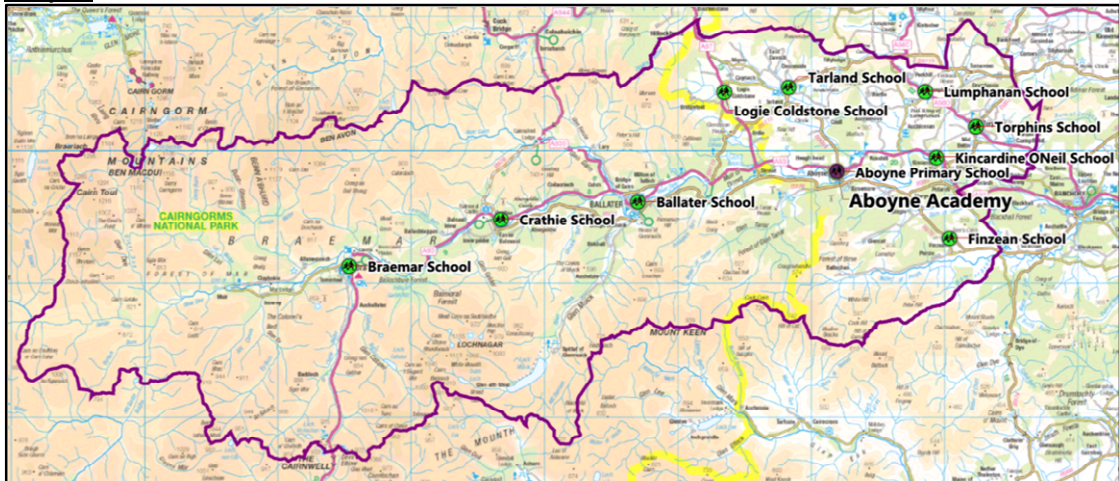


- 4.6 Lumphanan School has a capacity of 100 pupils and has a current roll of 51 pupils (June 2023) operating at 51% capacity.

Aboyne Academy

- 4.7 Aboyne Academy is located at Bridgeview Road, Aboyne, AB34 5JN and is within the Marr area of Aberdeenshire. The school is a six-year secondary comprehensive community school which serves the primary schools within the Aboyne Cluster; Aboyne Primary, Ballater, Braemar, Crathie, Finzean, Kincardine O'Neil, Logie Coldstone, Lumphanan, Tarland and Torphins Schools. The school is non-denominational.
- 4.8 The catchment area for Aboyne Academy covers Aboyne and the surrounding rural community of mid and upper Deeside. Map 4 below shows the Aboyne Academy catchment area with the primary school locations in green and the secondary school location in purple.

Map 4



- 4.9 Aboyne Academy was originally built in 1955 and has since been extended. The campus includes Deeside Community Education Centre as well as a public library. Aboyne Primary School is also located on the campus site.
- 4.10 The school accommodation and facilities cater for the curriculum of art, design and technology, business education, digital learning, guidance, humanities, health, modern languages, mathematics, performing arts and science. In addition to specialist subject teaching areas, the school building contains a fully equipped theatre, a learning plaza, a welfare suite, swimming pool, large games hall and an all-weather pitch.
- 4.11 Aboyne Academy has a capacity of 750 pupils. During the 2022/23 session Aboyne Academy had 707 pupils on roll.
- 4.12 Every local authority in Scotland is required to grade their schools for condition and suitability. The gradings range from A to D for each category with the following values:
- A: Good – Performing well and operating efficiently (85-100%)
 - B: Satisfactory – Performing adequately but with minor problems (60-85%)
 - C: Poor – Showing major problems and/or not operating optimally (40- 60%)
 - D: Bad – Does not support the delivery of services to children and communities (0-40%)
- 4.13 Aboyne Academy is rated as B for education suitability and rated B for building condition as per the education Core Facts April 2022.

Alford Academy

- 4.14 Alford Academy is located within Alford Community Campus, Greystone Road, Alford, AB33 8TY and is within the Marr area of Aberdeenshire. Alford Academy is a six-year non-denominational secondary school and serves the primary schools within the Alford Cluster; Alford Primary, Cluny, Craigievar, Dunecht, Echt, Keig, Lumsden, Midmar, Monymusk, Strathdon, Tough, Towie and Tullynessle Schools.

4.15 The catchment area for Alford Academy stretches from Echt and Dunecht in the east to Corgarff in the west. Map 5 below shows the Alford Academy catchment area with the primary school locations in green and the secondary school location in purple.

Map 5



4.16 Alford Academy is within a newly built Community Campus constructed in 2015 within the town of Alford. The campus comprises of a Nursery, Primary and Secondary education with community facilities such as sports, leisure and library services.

4.17 The school accommodation and facilities cater for the curriculum of literacy and english language, numeracy and mathematics, health and wellbeing, social studies, sciences, technologies, expressive arts, religious and moral education, and modern languages. The school building contains a theatre, swimming pool, sports hall, climbing wall, all weather pitch, running track, grass pitches and dry ski slope.

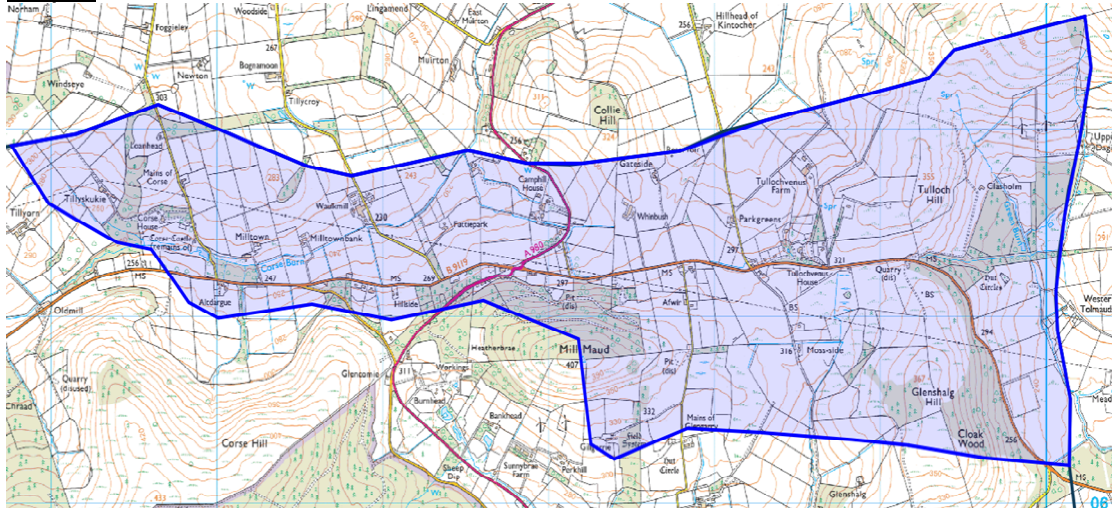
4.18 Alford Academy has a capacity of 700 pupils. During the 2022/23 session Alford Academy had a roll of 704 pupils.

4.19 Alford Academy is graded an A for suitability and condition as per the education Core Facts April 2022.

5. Anomaly Area

5.1 Map 6 below shows the anomaly, Area A in more detail.

Map 6



- 5.2 Area A contains less than 70 residential houses and is approximately three miles to Lumphanan School, ten miles from Aboyne Academy and seven miles from Alford Academy.
- 5.3 There are ten pupils who are currently attending primary and secondary schools within Area A. All Academy pupils residing within this area attend Aboyne Academy and receive school transport.
- 5.4 There are no housing planning applications within this area.

6. Details of Proposal

Rezoning of Lumphanan secondary school catchment anomaly

- 6.1 Aberdeenshire Council proposes to rezone Area A of the Lumphanan School catchment area to Aboyne Academy. This would formalise what is happening in practice and allow for all primary age pupils attending Lumphanan School to progress with their peers to Aboyne Academy.
- 6.2 The council proposal is that the Alford Academy and Aboyne Academy catchment areas should be amended with effect from August 2024, and from this date all secondary age pupils within Area A of the Lumphanan School catchment area should be zoned to Aboyne Academy. The council also proposes that any existing secondary age pupils attending Alford Academy can continue to do so. If the proposal is implemented any siblings of current pupils would also be able to attend Alford Academy subject to Aberdeenshire Council's Placing Request Policy.
- 6.3 It is important that this proposal does not have a negative impact upon any children currently attending schools affected by this proposal and that they have continuity in their education. No existing children will be required to change school if this proposal is adopted.

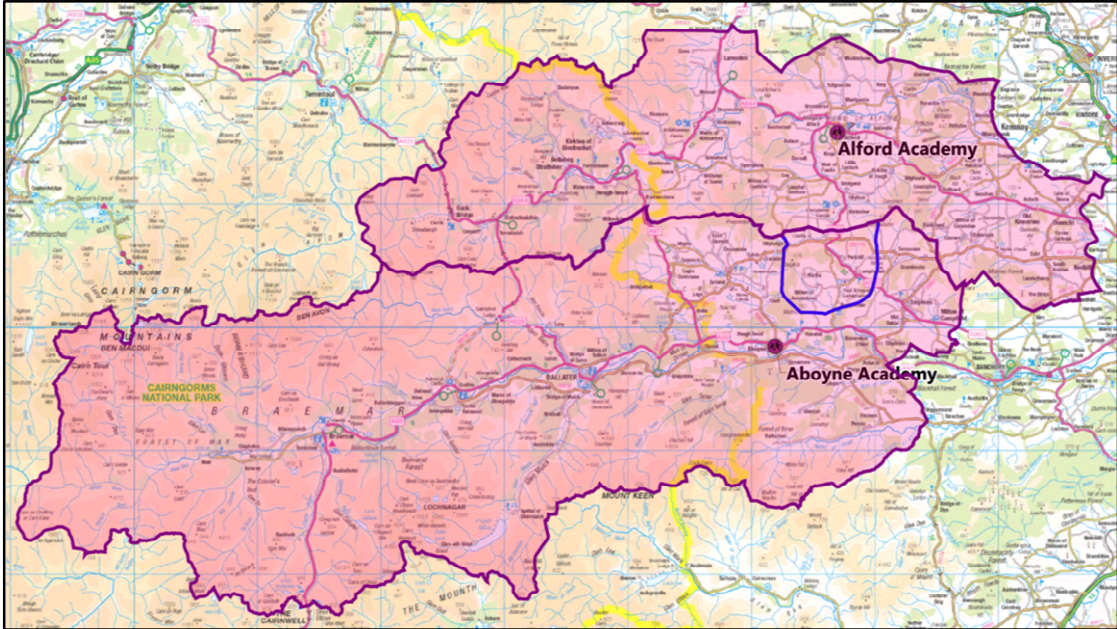
- 6.4 This proposal does not affect the primary provision. All pupils currently living within Area A will still be in the catchment area to attend Lumphanan School.
- 6.5 Table 1 below shows the published 2022 based school roll forecast for Aboyne Academy and Alford Academy.

Table 1 – Published 2022 based School Roll Forecasts

School	Capacity	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Aboyne Academy	750	668	662	644	622	627
Alford Academy	700	705	685	665	630	616

- 6.6 It is not anticipated that Aboyne Academy will exceed capacity in future years. The school roll for Alford Academy in 2023 according to the published forecast is due to exceed capacity, however this is only a one-year peak.
- 6.7 If this proposal is approved this would slightly decrease the expected roll of Alford Academy however this would be less than one pupil on average per year.
- 6.8 Map 7 below shows the proposed catchment area for Aboyne Academy including Area A within its catchment and Alford Academy catchment area removing Area A. The blue line is the catchment area for Lumphanan School showing this is all included within Aboyne Academy’s proposed catchment area.

Map 7



7. Educational Benefit Statement

- 7.1 In September 2019, Scotland’s Learning Estate Strategy ‘Connecting People, Places and Learning’ was launched. This was developed by Scottish Government and COSLA. This contains ten guiding principles. Local Authorities are required to take account of these principles in planning changes to their school estate, namely:

- Learning environments should support and facilitate excellent joined up learning and teaching to meet the needs of all learners;
- Learning environments should support the wellbeing of all learners, meet varying needs to support inclusion and support transitions for all learners;
- The learning estate should be well-managed and maintained, making the best of existing resources, maximising occupancy and representing and delivering best value;
- The condition and suitability of learning environments should support and enhance their function;
- Learning environments should serve the wider community and where appropriate be integrated with the delivery of other public services in line with the place principle;
- Learning environments should be greener, more sustainable, allow safe and accessible routes for walking, cycling and wheeling and be digitally enabled;
- Outdoor learning and the use of outdoor learning environments should be maximised;
- Good consultation about learning environments, direct engagement with learners and communities about their needs and experiences, and an involvement in decision making processes should lead to better outcomes for all;
- Collaboration across the learning estate, and collaboration with partners in localities, should support maximising its full potential;
- Investment in Scotland's learning estate should contribute towards improving learning outcomes and support sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

7.2 At the Education and Children's Services Committee on 18 March 2021, the revised Learning Estates Strategy, which sets the minimum standards for the various elements of educational buildings to achieve optimal educational benefit, was approved. The strategy for Aberdeenshire Council's Learning Estate sets out three values, Equity, Excellence and Inclusion. They are core to all decision making.

7.3 The proposed amendment to the Area A of the Lumphanan School catchment area will consolidate Aberdeenshire Council's agreement to give any pupils residing in the catchment area anomaly in zone entitled school transport and would remove the requirement for a placing request.

7.4 This proposal will support the views of the majority of residents within the catchment anomaly who believe that their postcode/address should be zoned for Aboyne Academy for secondary education.

7.5 This proposal will alleviate uncertainty and give clarity on secondary school catchment areas and school transport for children and families living in the catchment area anomaly.

- 7.6 This will enable all pupils within Lumphanan School to attend the same secondary school enhancing socialisation, friendships and opportunities to strengthen the community.
- 7.7 Secondary School transitions for Aboyne Academy will be more collaborative and cohesive as the entire P7 cohort of pupils zoned to Lumphanan School will be in zone for the same Academy.
- 7.8 The rezoning of Area A to Aboyne Academy will have a positive impact on mental health as reflected in the informal survey from previous pupils and families expressing distress on the current process and being out of zone for Aboyne Academy.
- 7.9 As secondary age children currently attending either Aboyne Academy or Alford Academy will not be required to move schools, they will continue to receive good quality education in whichever setting they attend.
- 7.10 Both Academies have a broad range of facilities and offer a full curriculum therefore any young people whose catchment area changes as a result of the consultation will have access to the same educational benefits as previously mentioned above.

8. Effect on the Local Community

- 8.1 Aberdeenshire Council recognise the uncertainty regarding secondary school catchment areas for residents living within Area A, and how this has impacted the community. It is hoped that this proposal once approved and implemented, will give clarity on the secondary school catchment area for those living within the catchment anomaly and the school community.
- 8.2 Residents living within Area A will all be in zone for Aboyne Academy therefore School Transport will be provided alleviating the uncertainty and concerns about transport within the community.
- 8.3 There will be more social opportunities for families and children within the Area A and the Lumphanan School community as they will be zoned to the same Academy.
- 8.4 This proposal supports the wishes of the majority of participants who completed the informal survey.
- 8.5 Participants of the survey stated they feel they are part of the Aboyne Community, this proposal will give more opportunities to strengthen the connections with the Aboyne Cluster.

9. School Transport

- 9.1 There are currently two school transport contracts which collect pupils from Area A as part of their wider routes travelling to Aboyne Academy at the total cost of £496.18 per day.

- 9.2 There are no pupils residing within Area A who receive school transport to Alford Academy.
- 9.3 If this proposal is approved School Transport to Aboyne Academy will continue for those pupils residing within Area A.

10. Financial Implications

- 10.1 There should be no financial implications arising from this proposal regarding school transport as this proposal formalises the current agreement of those pupils residing within Area A of the anomaly being considered as in zone and receiving school transport to Aboyne Academy.
- 10.2 As this proposal only affects a small number of pupils there should be no impact upon staffing requirements at either Alford Academy or Aboyne Academy.
- 10.3 The small number of additional pupils generated from this proposal will not impact upon any level of investment required to Aboyne Academy.

11. Sustainability

- 11.1 There should be no environmental impact in relation to transport emissions as these pupils are already being transported to Aboyne as per the current agreement so CO² emissions will remain the same.

12. Implications for Staff

- 12.1 As discussed in 10.2 there should be no staffing implications as this only affects a small number of pupils.
- 12.2 Additional Support Needs (ASN) teaching and pupil support staff are allocated to each school in accordance with an annual assessment of need across the cluster.
- 12.3 Trade Unions are included in the consultation process. Any impacts for staff will be addressed under existing HR policies.

13 Equal Opportunities

- 13.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is a statutory requirement on the Council to assess the policies and practices necessary to meet the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. It also affords an opportunity for the Council to consider the impact on the education service. An IIA has been carried out as part of the consultation process.
- 13.2 The purpose of an IIA is to examine policies and practice in a structured way to make sure that adverse effect on groups with protected characteristics are avoided. It is also a tool to enable the Council to assess what positive steps it can take to promote equality of opportunity and measure the results of the actions that have been taken.

- 13.3 It is not believed that rezoning Area A to Aboyne Academy will have a negative impact on any of the groups with protected characteristics. Any negative impact identified through the consultation will be addressed in the final consultation report.
- 13.4 As part of the consultation process the Council will consult with a wide range of stakeholders, including staff, parents/carers and young people and will address any comments about equity during this consultation.
- 13.5 Under The Equality Act 2010 education providers must not treat disabled pupils less favourably and should take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage. Existing arrangements in place for pupils within the schools affected with additional support needs will continue.

14 Alternatives to Proposal

Retain the Status Quo

- 14.1 Pupils residing within the anomaly, Area A within Lumphanan would continue to be zoned to Alford Academy for secondary education rather than the cluster academy of Aboyne Academy.
- 14.2 This would not address the current confusion caused by the catchment boundary and would still require the informal arrangements currently in place to be maintained. This has an administrative burden which affects a number of teams.

15 Consultation Arrangements

- 15.1 At its meeting on 31 August 2023, Aberdeenshire Council's Education and Children's Services Committee were asked to agree that a proposal document should be issued as a basis for consultation. No decision will be taken by the Council on the proposal contained in the document until after the end of the consultation period. The Education and Children's Services Committee will then receive a report on the consultation and will reach a decision on the proposal.
- 15.2 A copy of this document will be issued to all of the consultees listed on the first page of this document and it will also be published on the Council's website: <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/education-consultations/>
- 15.3 The period for consultation will run from 5 September 2023 until 3 November 2023 which covers the minimum required period of 30 school days.
- 15.4 A face-to-face public meeting will be held to discuss the proposal at 6.30pm on 14 September 2023 at Lumphanan School. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is welcome. The meeting will be convened by the Council and the Council will present the reasons for bringing forward the proposal. There will be an opportunity for questions and comments at the meeting. A minute will be taken so that comments can later be summarised and considered.
- 15.5 Opportunities will be provided for the staff working at Aboyne Academy, Alford Academy and Lumphanan School to discuss the proposals. Opportunities will

also be arranged for the pupils at each school to engage in the consultation in a manner appropriate to their age.

- 15.6 An online survey will be available as part of the consultation. This can be completed at the following address;
engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/secondary-catchment-anomaly-rezoning-at-lumphanan or by scanning the QR code below:



- 15.7 The Council will also consider any written comments which should be emailed to LearningEstates@aberdeenshire.gov.uk. Alternatively, any comments can be sent to Learning Estates, Gordon House, Blackhall Road, Inverurie, AB51 3WA. Comments should be received no later than 4pm on 3 November 2023.
- 15.8 A copy of this document will also be sent to Education Scotland. They will also receive a copy of any relevant written representations that are received by the Council during the consultation period. They will also receive a copy of any oral representations made at the public meeting and a copy of any other relevant documentation. Education Scotland will then prepare a report on the educational aspects of the proposal. In preparing their report, they may visit the school and make such reasonable enquiries as they consider appropriate.

16. Consideration of Consultation Responses

- 16.1 The Council will review the proposal having regard to the Education Scotland Report, survey results, written representations that it has received, and oral representations made to it by any person at the public meeting. It will then prepare a report on the consultation. This report will be published in electronic format and will be available on the Council website.
- 16.2 The report will include a record of the total number of written representations made during the consultation period, a summary of the written representations and a summary of the oral representations made at the public meeting. The report will also include the Authority's response to the Education Scotland Report, a response to issues raised through any written or oral representations it has received, together with a copy of the Education Scotland Report and any other relevant information, including details of any alleged inaccuracies and how these have been handled. The report will also contain a statement explaining how the Council has complied with the requirement to review the proposal in light of the Education Scotland Report and representations (both written and oral) that it received.
- 16.3 The last section of the report will include an officer recommendation as to whether the proposals should be adopted and implemented. The Consultation Report will be published at least three weeks prior to the Council making a decision.

16.4 A final decision is likely to be made by the Council on the proposed changes in Spring 2024.

17. Decision Making

17.1 The consultation report will be considered firstly by Marr Area Committee who will be asked to make a recommendation on whether the proposed changes are implemented.

17.2 Following Marr Area Committee, Education and Children's Services Committee will consider the report and be asked to approve the officer recommendation in the report. This is expected to be in Spring 2024.

18. Conclusion

18.1 Taking the above into account Aberdeenshire Council recommends rezoning Area A to Aboyne Academy for secondary provision.

18.2 This Statutory Consultation will give clarity to the community of Area A ensuring all pupils zoned to Lumphanan School are entitled to attend Aboyne Academy.

18.3 The proposed change will reflect the wishes of the residents within Area A, to give certainty with secondary school zoning and entitlement to school transport.

18.4 From August 2024 all new children moving into Area A or current pupils progressing to S1 pupils from this date should attend their newly zoned secondary school of Aboyne Academy.

18.5 Existing pupils will not be required to change schools. This will also apply to any younger siblings of current pupils attending Alford Academy subject to Aberdeenshire Council Placing Request Policy.

18.6 This proposal paper is issued in terms of the authority's procedures to meet the relevant statutory requirements.